



Energy and Technology Committee

March 8, 2022

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 278

**AAC REQUIRING MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING DISTRIBUTORS TO  
PAY A COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAMMING FEE**

Submitted by John Erlingheuser, Director of Advocacy & Outreach

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of 38 million nationwide and approximately 600,000 in Connecticut. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP CT supports S.B. 278, An Act Establishing the State Civic Network. With the decrease in reliable local news outlets, the need for Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access channels has increased. AARP members often rely on PEG programming to find out what is going on in their local communities and state. This in turn allows for better-informed voting, more seasoned advocacy and more productive conversations between local and state public officials and their constituents. The benefits of PEG programming translate into a healthier representative democracy for us all.

The 50+ demographic is one of the most politically active and civic-minded subsets of our population, one that has long recognized the value of the PEG access programming. However, in recent years, many consumers have begun “cutting the cord” from traditional services providers and receive programming online via streaming services. This has created a giant problem for PEG programming as it is paid for via a fee on cable bills.

Because of this current and outdated funding mechanism, nonprofit PEG programming is seriously at risk. The solution is to find a way to restructure the funding mechanism for PEG. Senate Bill 278 would solve this funding problem by requiring the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to establish a fee paid by subscribers of video streaming, internet access and cable television, and limit the applicable fee to one household per purchased service.

Thank you for your time and consideration.